

## NEW STAR RATING SYSTEM FOR FOOD PREMISES IN LONDON

Star ratings for food premises throughout London will shortly be published on the website [www.yourlondon.gov.uk](http://www.yourlondon.gov.uk). The London Borough of Richmond -upon-Thames, along with the majority of other London authorities is participating in a 2 year pilot project which, for the first time in London will provide members of the public with an insight into the standards of hygiene in their food premises.

Food businesses are be assessed during routine food hygiene inspections and the final rating given for each premises will be based on the following factors:

**Hygiene:** Handling practices and temperature control.

**Structure:** Cleanliness, layout and condition, lighting, ventilation facilities etc

**Confidence in Management Systems:** eg. hazard analysis system, track record.

The rating will be from 0 - 5 stars, with the best premises being awarded 5 stars.

Following an inspection, businesses will be informed of the rating that they have been awarded and provided with a certificate, which they are encouraged to display on their premises.

The rating for all premises inspected will be available on the website 14 days after the inspection. Sole traders operating from a home address will not be included in the scheme.

Premises that have been inspected since 1 January 2006 will be given a star rating based on the findings of the officer during the last inspection. There will be no data available on the website for inspections prior to that date and these premises will be rated during the next programmed visit.

## Safer Food Better Business

From January 2006 all food businesses have been required to write down what they do to make sure the food they sell is safe to eat.

The Food Standards Agency has developed a pack called Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) based on the principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points). It is a simple, jargon free, food safety management system to help small and medium sized businesses:

- Comply with the new regulations
- Make food safely
- Train staff
- Protect the reputation of the business

- Improve profitability by wasting less food

The pack includes sections on Cross Contamination, Cleaning, Chilling, Cooking, Management and a Daily Diary.

SFBB can either be downloaded from the FSA website [www.foodstandards.gov.uk](http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk) or your local EHO can bring a pack to your business and help you get started. There are separate packs for caterers and retailers and some of the information is available in languages other than English.

Remember, at your next food hygiene inspection you will be expected to have a food safety management system in place, so act now.

# UNDERSTANDING LABELLING RULES

Falsely describing, advertising or presenting food is an offence, and there are a number of laws that help protect consumers against dishonest labelling and misdescription. The offences generally fall into the following categories:

**Not having the necessary composition for a legal name** - in order to be called 'chocolate', for example, the food must have a certain amount of cocoa solids. Similarly, in order to be called a 'sausage', it must have certain amount of meat in it.

**Substitution with cheaper ingredients** - adding low cost ingredients to a more expensive product, such as diluting olive oil with vegetable oils.

**Extending a food** - perhaps with water or other fillers, such as adding water to orange juice, or offal to meat products and not declaring it.

**Incorrect origin** - Incorrectly labelling the true origin of the food or ingredients in terms of :

- animal species - misdescribing the meat species in a product or not declaring other meat present
- Plant variety - adding cheaper varieties to a premium rice such as Basmati
- Geographical origin or country - giving the incorrect country or floral origin of a honey or region for a wine
- Incorrect or failure to describe a process or treatment - not declaring if food has been irradiated or previously frozen, or the use of mechanically recovered meat (MRM)
- Incorrect quantitative declaration - giving the wrong amount of an ingredient e.g. declaring the wrong amount of meat in burger

Consumers should be able to be confident with their choice of foods and be able to buy according to their particular requirements. They have a right to expect that the food bought matches the description given on the label and that they get what they pay for. It can be a very complex area of the law. If you need help in understanding your responsibilities contact your Environmental Health Officer at the address below or go to the Food Standards Agency web site [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)



**Most people eat too much salt.** This can raise blood pressure, which

increases your risk of heart disease and stroke. During Food Standards inspections your Environmental Health Officer will be raising the issue of salt to help meet Government targets for the reduction of salt.

## What You Can Do:

- Tell your customers you are reducing salt in your foods and why.
- Give customers a choice of no salt.
- Measure salt carefully if you do use it
- Explore alternative ways of seasoning food, such as using herbs, garlic, ginger etc.
- Use home made dressings, marinades, sauces etc so you know how much salt is in them.

Visit [www.salt.gov.uk](http://www.salt.gov.uk) or [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) for more information.

## Waste Oil Disposal

Disposing of waste oil is often a problem for food businesses. Pouring waste oil and fats down drains can result in expensive blockages. Where large quantities of cooking oils are used businesses may wish to consider the option of installing grease traps, but regular maintenance is important.

The best way to dispose of used oils and fats is to decant them into containers that can be sealed/covered for collection and disposal by a reputable, registered waste carrier. If you want to play your part in saving the environment you could even consider using a contractor who could arrange for your waste oil to be recycled as biodeisel.